



Emergency Management and Response Information Sharing and Analysis Center (EMR-ISAC)

INFOGRAM 24-08

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NOTE: This INFOGRAM will be distributed weekly to provide members of the Emergency Services Sector with information concerning the protection of their critical infrastructures. For further information, contact the Emergency Management and Response- Information Sharing and Analysis Center (EMR-ISAC) at (301) 447-1325 or by e-mail at emr-isac@dhs.gov.

Independence Day Celebrations

Independence Day observances attract large groups of people at thousands of locations throughout the United States. Unfortunately, Fourth of July activities present easy and attractive targets for domestic and transnational terrorists. The holiday offers countless opportunities to attack areas that would cause mass casualties and involve high-profile, national security, and critical infrastructure concerns.

Although there may be no substantiated threats against this year's holiday revelry, community leaders, particularly in major cities, must consider the probability of terrorism, criminal behavior, vandalism, confrontational tactics, demonstrations, service disruptions, etc. Local government officials and their Emergency Services Sector (ESS) organizations can capitalize on the few remaining days to guarantee that all critical infrastructures (i.e., personnel, physical assets, and communication/cyber systems) are sufficiently protected and prepared for any civil unrest, criminal violence, or terrorism that might occur during Independence Day merriment.

The inherent problem for government leaders and emergency responders is the delicate balance between protecting citizens and local critical infrastructures in addition to the civil liberties Americans enjoy because of events that occurred on 4 July 1776. To help reconcile this problem and ensure citizen safety and morale, as well as successful Fourth of July festivities, the Emergency Management and Response—Information Sharing and Analysis Center (EMR-ISAC) provides the following brief reminders from various sources to enhance preparatory measures of ESS departments and agencies:

- Encourage personnel to be alert and immediately report any situation that appears to constitute a threat or suspicious activity.
- Develop provisions to validate the identity of official personnel, guests, and vehicles that may be seen at or near planned gatherings.
- Familiarize with local first responder uniforms and vehicles, including those from mutual aid partners and other adjacent municipalities.
- Establish strict internal accountability for uniforms, accouterments, vehicles, operating devices, codes, and anything else that can be used by adversaries to "legitimize" their presence or to facilitate illicit acts.
- Ascertain if there is any group (violent or non-violent) that plans to appear at local celebrations with or without a formally approved permit.
- Rehearse plans to professionally intercept and remove individuals or groups that unlawfully disrupt proceedings.
- Confirm the readiness of local stakeholders and mutual aid partners to execute emergency response plans if an attack or violence occurs.
- Reinforce the National Incident Management System and the Incident Command System.

Fireworks' Power and Popularity

It would be hard to imagine July 4th festivities in the United States without public displays of fireworks. But celebrations can become tragic when someone is seriously injured by consumer fireworks. Despite federal and state regulations on the type of fireworks available for sale to the general public, even those fireworks that are sold legally carry an elevated risk of personal injury.

When researching the dangers of fireworks currently available for sale, the Emergency Management and Response—Information Sharing and Analysis Center (EMR-ISAC) learned that this year's fireworks are flashier, more creative, and much louder than ever before. Thanks to an increase in the legal limit of the amount of pyrotechnic material allowed in consumer fireworks, a whole new class of recreational explosives has become accessible to amateur enthusiasts according to the fireworks industry.

The American Pyrotechnics Association recently wrote that the use of backyard fireworks has more than doubled since 2000, mainly because of their rise in both power and popularity. The EMR-ISAC considers this fact a matter of concern for Emergency Services Sector (ESS) organizations. The dangerous mix of increased explosive energy, possible alcohol consumption, and a bunch of people in the dark has the potential to make the Fourth of July an incredibly difficult and perilous day to work as first responders (e.g., fire and EMS) and first receivers (i.e., hospitals).

Statistics maintained by the fireworks industry indicate that last year Americans used 280 million pounds of display and backyard pyrotechnics. Industry specialists forecasted a growth in sales during 2008. Therefore, the EMR-ISAC recommends a review of safety procedures when responding to an emergency involving the presence and use of fireworks during the days surrounding our nation's birthday.

Additional information regarding safety issues and the dangers of fireworks can be seen at:
<http://www.usfa.dhs.gov/downloads/pdf/tfrs/v5i4.pdf>.

ESS Responses to an Ailing Economy

The current economy and rising fuel prices are contributing to widespread budget deficits at state and local levels throughout the United States. The Emergency Management and Response—Information Sharing and Analysis Center (EMR-ISAC) acknowledges that severely constrained funding affects the plans and operations of Emergency Services Sector (ESS) departments and agencies. Especially hard hit are responder organizations that have exceeded, or are close to exceeding, their yearly fuel allotments because budgeted prices soared beyond projections. Therefore, the EMR-ISAC researched and identified the following changes that emergency departments throughout the nation are implementing to cope with diminishing operating funds:

- Add fuel surcharges or fees to moving violation tickets, e.g., speeding.
(<http://www.lawofficer.com/news-and-articles/news/Speeders to Pay Extra for Police Fuel.html>)
- Increase use of bicycle patrols.
- Require officers to pair up in patrol cars.
- Park squad cars at high-visibility locations for 10 minutes of each shift hour.
- Stop dispatching engine companies to "fender-benders" to perform traffic control.
- Turn off vehicle engines when idling for more than a few minutes.
- Handle the routine, non-emergency calls for assistance via telephone.
- Delay purchases of department vehicles, apparatus, and non-essential equipment.
- Postpone building maintenance, where possible.
- Arrange with school districts or other area stakeholders to bulk purchase fuel at discounted prices.
- Add surcharges for private companies requesting an officer detail for their work areas.
- Raise building inspection fees.

- Require businesses to pay fees for police and/or fire responses to a faulty alarm.
- Charge “non-resident” fees when police and fire respond to motor vehicle accidents.
- Curtail the practice of allowing personnel to take official vehicles home.

The pros and cons of any cost-cutting plan need to be weighed carefully, because some measures can have unintended consequences. For example, one jurisdiction saved approximately \$400,000 over five months by limiting the number of miles driven by law enforcement personnel, but lost an estimated \$2 million because of the substantial decrease in the number of traffic tickets issued. The restricted driving distances also resulted in thousands fewer traffic stops of intoxicated drivers and “wanted” felons.

EOC Grant Period Open

Emergency Operations Centers (EOCs), an essential element of a comprehensive emergency management system, are vital in ensuring continuity of operations (COOP) and continuity of government (COG) before and during major natural and man-made disasters. Flexible, sustainable, secure, and interoperable EOCs are also indispensable in protecting and sustaining the critical infrastructures— personnel, physical assets, and communication/cyber systems—of the Emergency Services Sector (ESS).

The Emergency Management and Response—Information Sharing and Analysis Center (EMR-ISAC) alerts ESS leaders that EOCs can request up to \$1 million for construction projects, or up to \$250,000 for renovation projects through the FY 2008 EOC Grant Program. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) will award \$15 million in grant money based on how well applicants address the program criteria: state-identified priorities, quality of justification, and pre-existing planning.

Eligibility for the EOC Grant Program is limited to the State Administrative Agencies (SAA) that apply for funding on behalf of all eligible state, local, and tribal EOCs. The FY 2008 EOC Grant Program funds may be used over a 36-month period for EOC construction and renovation costs, planning costs to support such activities, management and administrative costs, and limited EOC equipment costs.

The SAA, in coordination with the state emergency management agency, will review all EOC project applications and identify high-, medium-, and low-priority projects based on state, local, and tribal priorities and needs. A review panel of national and regional FEMA staff and peer subject matter experts will conduct a final review of the projects to determine the allocations. The grant program requires a federal match of 75 percent and a 25 percent grantee cost-share cash or in-kind match for FY 2008.

Completed EOC applications must be submitted to FEMA at www.grants.gov no later than 11:59 p.m. EDT, July 28, 2008. Additional information is available at <http://www.fema.gov/news/newsrelease.fema?id=43846>.

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The National Infrastructure Coordinating Center (NICC) within the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Office of Infrastructure Protection is the central point for notifications regarding infrastructure threats, disruptions, intrusions, and suspicious activities. Emergency Services Sector personnel are requested to report any incidents or attacks involving their infrastructures using at least the first and second points of contact seen below:

- 1) NICC - Voice: 202-282-9201, Fax: 703-487-3570, E-Mail: nicc@dhs.gov
- 2) Your local FBI office - Web: <http://www.fbi.gov/contact/fo/fo.htm>
- 3) EMR-ISAC - Voice: 301-447-1325, E-Mail: emr-isac@dhs.gov, fax: 301-447- 1034,
Web: www.usfa.dhs.gov/subjects/emr-isac, Mail: J-247, 16825 South Seton Avenue,
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